

HERITAGE STUDY

Stage 3 of the Site C Clean Energy Project (Site C) is the environmental and regulatory review phase. As part of an environmental assessment of Site C, BC Hydro will identify and assess potential project effects — environmental, economic, social, heritage and health — and opportunities to provide lasting benefits for the region and First Nations. Where effects cannot be avoided, BC Hydro will identify and evaluate options for mitigation.

This study update provides an overview of work completed to date and currently underway and is current as of fall 2011. Studies may be changed or revised in scope or timing on the basis of input from regulators, government agencies, First Nations, stakeholders and the public as part of the pre-application stage of the environmental assessment process.

The Site C project requires environmental certification and other regulatory permits and approvals before it can proceed to construction. In addition, the Crown has a duty to consult and, where appropriate, accommodate Aboriginal groups.

DEFINITION

A heritage assessment includes consideration of archaeological, paleontological, and historical resources in the vicinity of the proposed Site C project area. Palaeontological resources include evidence of prehistoric life. Archaeological and historical resources include evidence of both ancient and more recent human historical use of the landscape, including artefacts predating 1846 which are specifically protected under the *Heritage Conservation Act* in British Columbia.

STUDY PURPOSE

The purpose of the heritage study is to complete inventories of archaeological and historical resources, as well as field reconnaissance for palaeontological resources. Where the project may result in adverse effects on these resources, strategies will be developed to avoid or mitigate these effects, based on the resources and the nature of disturbances associated with project construction and operation.

The archaeological component of the heritage study has been designed in consultation with the B.C. Archaeology Branch and meets the requirements of the *Heritage Conservation Act*.

STATUS OF STUDIES

Consultation

Heritage resources were a topic for public and stakeholder consultation during Stage 2 from May to June 2008:

- Participants were asked which factors should be considered when evaluating options to mitigate potential effects of the Site C project on heritage resources. Of five factors to be considered, participants were most likely to choose identifying and recovering unique

regional heritage artifacts, followed by respecting cultural priorities for artifacts associated with specific communities. Over half of participants also believed that creating regional displays for recovered regional heritage resources and identifying the best way to protect heritage artifacts should be considered.

- An open-ended question asked participants to identify factors for consideration when evaluating options to mitigate effects on heritage resources as a result of the creation of a reservoir. Heritage related factors considered important by participants included a concern that heritage sites will be flooded and lost forever. A range of opinions on how best to preserve artifacts and the cultural heritage were also expressed. Issues raised included flooding and permanent loss of heritage sites, and the suggestion that BC Hydro should work with First Nations on heritage related issues.

During Stage 2 Project Definition Consultation in October and November 2008, participants expressed an interest in, and knowledge about, the region's heritage, including pre-contact archaeology, more recent pioneering history, and fossils.

This consultation input is being considered, along with financial and technical input, as the Site C project conducted a heritage study and moves forward through the regulatory review stage.

Stage 3 Work

During Stage 2, work on heritage focused on reviewing previous heritage field work and studies, considering public input, and initiating discussion with key government agencies, Aboriginal groups and archaeologists.

The heritage field program began in 2010 and is anticipated to continue through to 2012. Archaeological field work primarily consists of shovel tests, visual inspections of areas with exposed soil such as freshly tilled fields, and exposed bedrock outcrops, and deep testing in areas that may have deeply buried archaeological remains. Field work also included site inspections of possible historic features, such as pioneer cabins or buildings. Palaeontology studies included preparation of geological information to inform the potential for palaeontological features, and field reconnaissance and surface inspections.

Golder Associates is leading the work, supported by local field office coordination and archaeologists from AMEC Earth and Environmental, archaeologists from Millennia Research Ltd, and palaeontologists from Branta Biostratigraphy. Local archaeological field assistants from Aboriginal communities in the region were provided training, and as of September 2011 more than 100 individuals had worked about 1,200 person days on the program.

The following is a summary of work underway as part of the 2010/2011 field season:

Archaeology Program

Archaeological field crews survey areas on foot and conduct shovel tests in areas identified as having archaeological potential. Shovel tests are typically 35 cm by 35 cm square and up to 50 cm in depth. Soil from shovel tests is screened and all holes are refilled once testing is completed.

Throughout the field program, crews map, photograph and record any heritage resources that are found. Archaeological artifacts will be collected for further analysis and sent to the Fort St. John-North Peace Museum for curation. Archaeological site inventory forms will be completed for all new sites and known sites that are revisited in accordance with Archaeology Branch requirements.

As of September 2011, systematic archaeological surveys have been completed in the proposed reservoir and dam site area covering approximately 200 hectares of land identified as having archaeological potential. During these surveys, 49 new archaeological sites were recorded and 34 previously recorded sites were revisited. As of September 2011, there have been close to 28,000 shovel tests completed. A program dedicated to locating deeply buried archaeological resources using mechanized equipment such as backhoes is scheduled to start in mid-October.

The completion of the archaeological inventory for additional project areas is scheduled for 2012.

Historical Program

Field work for the historic component is being completed alongside the archaeological program, and includes documentation of structures, trails or sites of more recent historical interest. Historic sites that pre-date 1846 are protected under the *Heritage Conservation Act* and will be recorded according to Archaeology Branch requirements.

As of September 2011, four new historical sites were found and 10 of 19 previously recorded historic sites were reconfirmed. Field notes will identify the reasons sites were not able to be reconfirmed, for example if a structure is no longer present or standing that was identified previously.

Palaeontological Program

The palaeontological field assessment is being completed by professional palaeontologists and involves significant geological analysis to identify the potential for prehistoric remains of various eras, followed by field work to locate and assess sites through visual inspection of exposed rock and shoreline areas.

During August 2011, a palaeontological survey took place in the proposed reservoir and dam site areas. Crews inspected most of the length of the Peace River within the proposed reservoir area and up portions of several tributaries. Approximately 200 new palaeontological sites were located, and 17 previously recorded palaeontological sites were revisited. Crews collected numerous fossil samples for further study.

Stage 3: Consultation

The Site C project requires environmental certification and other regulatory permits and approvals before it can proceed to construction.

The Stage 3 environmental and regulatory review process will include opportunities for consultation and input by the public, Aboriginal groups, communities, property owners and stakeholders.

In addition to the consultation opportunities led by the environmental regulatory agencies within the environmental assessment process, BC Hydro will lead several streams of public and stakeholder

consultation during Stage 3:

- Regional and Local Government Liaison
- Property Owner Liaison
- Local Area Consultation
- Preliminary Design Consultation

BC Hydro and Aboriginal groups are also engaged in a thorough consultation process that will continue through all stages of the project.

How Input Will Be Used

A Consultation Summary Report will be prepared and released on the project website following each consultation period and Consideration Memos will be prepared, indicating how input has been considered, along with technical and financial information, for project designs or plans, including engineering and environmental mitigation plans.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The following information can be found at www.bchydro.com/sitec:

1. Field Studies Notices – Monthly updates on field studies.
2. Site C Clean Energy Project: Project Description Report. 2011. (pages 85-86).
3. Stage 2: Consultation and Technical Review. 2009. (page 85).
4. Peace River Site C Hydro Project: Project Definition Consultation Discussion Guide and Feedback Form, Round 1: May/June 2008. 2008. (pages 20 and 30).
5. BC Hydro Peace River Site C Hydro Project: Project Definition Consultation, Round 1 Summary Report. 2008. (page 62-64).
6. Peace River Site C Hydro Project – Heritage Resources Data Gap Analysis.
7. Site C Feasibility Review: Stage 1 Completion Report. 2007. (page 52).

INQUIRIES

Updates on field studies are available at www.bchydro.com/sitec and in the Community Consultation offices in Fort St. John and Hudson's Hope.

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